CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1077
23 May 1991

Original: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 22 MAY 1991 FROM THE ACTING REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING A STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA CONCERNING THE UNITED STATES INITIATIVE FOR COMPLETING THE NEGOTIATIONS ON A CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION, AND A WHITE HOUSE FACT SHEET ON THE INITIATIVE

I have the honour to forward to you the attached statement issued by the President of the United States, Mr. George Bush, concerning the United States initiative for completing the negotiations on a Chemical Weapons Convention, and a White House Fact Sheet on the initiative.

I ask that you take the appropriate steps to enter this statement and fact sheet as official documents of the Conference on Disarmament and to have them distributed to all member delegations and non-member States participating in the work of the Conference.

(Signed) M. LYALL BRECKON
Acting Representative of the
United States of America to
the Conference on Disarmament

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

---

13 May 1991

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT ON CHEMICAL WEAPONS INITIATIVE

The Gulf war has once again raised the spectre of chemical weapons and demonstrated that unscrupulous régimes can and will threaten innocent populations with these weapons of terror so long as we permit them to exist. These stark events renew and reinforce my conviction, shared by responsible leaders around the world, that chemical weapons must be banned - everywhere in the world.

The world's best hope for this goal is the Chemical Weapons Convention now being negotiated by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The United States is committed to the early, successful completion of this Convention and I am today announcing a number of steps we will take to accelerate the negotiations and achieve an effective chemical weapons ban as soon as possible. I hope this initiative also will spur other nations to commit themselves equally to this critical objective.

I have instructed the United States negotiating team in Geneva to implement my decisions at the next session which begins 14 May. To demonstrate the United States commitment to banning chemical weapons, we are formally foreswearing the use of chemical weapons for any reason, including retaliation, against any State, effective when the Convention enters into force, and will propose that all States follow suit. Further, the United States unconditionally commits itself to the destruction of all our stocks of chemical weapons within 10 years of entry into force and will propose that all other States do likewise. We will offer technical assistance to others to do this efficiently and safely.

In addition, we will call for setting a target date to conclude the Convention and recommend the Conference stay in continuous session if necessary to meet the target. The United States also will propose new and effective verification measures for inspecting sites suspected of producing or storing chemical weapons. To provide tangible benefits for those States that join the Convention and significant penalties for those that fail to support it, the United States will propose the Convention require parties to refuse to trade in chemical weapon-related materials with States that do not join in the Convention. The United States reaffirms that we will impose all appropriate sanctions in response to violations of the Convention, especially the use of chemical weapons.

These steps can move the world significantly closer to the goal of a world free of chemical weapons. I call upon all other nations to join us in the serious and cooperative pursuit of this important goal.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

FACT SHEET ON CHEMICAL WEAPONS INITIATIVE

Noting that the recent conflict in the Persian Gulf had brought into play once again the spectre of the use of chemical weapons against innocent populations, the President announced a new series of steps in his long-term goals of ridding the world of these weapons of terror. The President reiterated his belief that the best hope for achieving that goal is the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) - a multilateral treaty that would completely ban the production, possession, transfer and use of chemical weapons - under negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva.

The primary purposes of this initiative are to strengthen the prospects of an early successful conclusion of the Convention, to demonstrate the commitment of the United States to achieving an effective ban on CW as soon as possible, and to provide incentives to other nations to commit themselves equally to this critical objective. To this end, the President declared that the United States delegation to the CD would take the following actions when the next session of the talks on the CWC resumes 14 May 1991:

1. The United States will call for the resolution of all major outstanding issues in the CD talks in Geneva on the CWC by the end of 1991 and the completion of the CWC within twelve (12) months.

2. To help reach these goals and to ensure that no time is lost and no opportunity is wasted to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion soon, the United States will propose that the CW ad hoc negotiating committee of the CD stay in continuous session in Geneva, beginning with the May session. The United States is prepared to keep its ambassador at the table and to reinforce its delegation as necessary to support this schedule.

3. The United States will formally declare its intention to become an original party to the CWC and will call upon all States publicly to commit to becoming original parties to the treaty and to declare their CW stocks.

4. The United States will drop its position that States retain a right of retaliation with CW as long as they have CW stocks if CW are used against them first. The United States will formally foreswear the use of CW for any reason, including retaliation in kind with CW, against any State, effective when the CWC enters into force. The United States will also propose a provision for the CWC prohibiting the use of CW for any reason.

5. The United States will drop its position that we must be allowed to keep 2 per cent of our CW stockpile (500 tons) until all CW-capable States have joined the Convention. The United States will unconditionally commit itself to the destruction of all of its CW stocks and former production facilities within 10 years of entry into force of the CWC. We will call upon all States to follow our lead and to begin the destruction of their CW stocks and production facilities as soon as possible. We will propose provisions for the

CWC that require all parties to begin the unconditional destruction of their CW stocks and production facilities as soon as the CWC enters into force, and to complete their elimination within 10 years of that date.

6. The United States will provide practical and effective help to other States to assist in the speedy, safe and environmentally sound destruction of CW wherever they may be found. We will:

- Create a Task Force comprised of United States Government and private industry representatives to develop proposals on how the United States can advise and assist States in CW destruction.

- Provide technical destruction assistance (e.g., visits to United States destruction facilities, blueprints and technical advice) to States parties that have CW located on their territory.

- Propose the creation of a CD Working Group on CW destruction and offer to provide United States experts to it.

7. The United States will provide extensive information to other States on United States export controls on CW-related materials and technology and our domestic legislation to enforce them. We will call on all States to enact similar controls, thereby enhancing the control of CW proliferation as we work toward a complete and formal ban.

8. Aside from the significant intrinsic benefits that will flow to all parties from a total ban on CW, there should be tangible benefits for those States that join the Convention and enhance its strength, and specific penalties for those States that fail to support it in the most fundamental and important way by not joining it. Therefore, the United States will propose provisions for the CWC that require parties to refuse to trade in CW-related materials with States that do not become parties within a reasonable time after entry into force.

9. The United States will reaffirm our position that there should be sanctions against those States that violate the CWC and especially severe sanctions against any State that initiates the use of CW. The United States declares that it will consider violations of the CWC, especially the initiation of the use of CW, as extremely grave breaches of international law, and that the United States will impose all appropriate sanctions.

10. The United States will reaffirm our commitment to a strong and forthright verification régime. We will offer additional concrete proposals to address the central issue of inspecting suspect sites. We will call on the CD to adopt our position for challenge inspections of such sites.